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MEDIA STATEMENTS VS. INTELLIGENCE ON CUBAN ROLE IN ZAIRE

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15 May 1978: "Carter Administration officials in Washington expressed concern over reports that Kolwezi had fallen to rebel forces who had crossed into Zaire and were being aided by Cubans based in Angola." /SOURCE: Washington Post: Reuters/

18 May 1978: "There were continuing reports yesterday that some officials of the Carter administration are anxiously seeking a way to make a show of force against the major Cuban military presence in Africa, supported by Soviet weaponry."

"There is no tangible evidence, U.S. officials concede, that Cuban troops are among the so-called 'Katanga gendarmes' who are the attackers in Shaba Province, although U.S. officials say they believe these troops were trained by Cubans in Angola." /SOURCE: Washington Post: Murray Marder/

19 May 1978: "Cuban President Fidel Castro called in Lyle Lane, the chief U.S. diplomat in Cuba,

19 May 1978: "Castro's claim that no Cubans are with the Katangan invaders in Shaba is prob-

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Wednesday to assert that Cuba has no military personnel operating in Zaire's embattled Shaba province."

"U.S. officials noted that the U.S. has not charged that Cuban personnel were operating inside Zaire, although there have been reports that the Shaba insurgents have been aided by Cuban training and perhaps logistical support across the border in Angola." /SOURCE: Washington Post: William Claiborne & Don Oberdorfer/

ably true. There has been no evidence of Cuban forces operating with the Katangans. Similarly, there was no credible evidence that any Cubans fought alongside the Katangans who invaded Zaire last year." 25X1C

"The United States, although highly critical of the estimated 20,000 Cuban troops in Angola, did not endorse Zaire's charge that Cubans were involved in the fighting in Zaire, centering on the copper center of Kolwezi. But some high officials were willing to believe the charge, especially since Cuban forces have been active in other parts of Africa and in Southern Yemen."

"According to officials, it was impossible to tell whether Mr. Castro was being completely candid since it has been assumed here for some time that Cuban forces in Angola had at least some advisory role with the Katangans, who have lived in Angola since leaving Zaire, then known as the Congo, in the mid-1960s."

"Tom Reson, a State Department spokesman, said that 'there are no Cuban troops we know of' in Zaire." /SOURCE: NY Times: Bernard Gwertzman/

20 May 1978: "Nevertheless, State Department spokesman Reston said, it is 'our understanding' that the 'insurgents have been trained recently by Cubans in Angola and are using Soviet weapons.' When asked why he was making the statement, Reston replied, 'I ask you to draw your own conclusions.'"

"At the White House yesterday /Jody/ Powell said: 'I can say we have no confirmation of Cubans being involved in military operations in Zaire. However, I should also add that we do know that the

20 May 1978: "Local residents of Kolwezi told the [ ] that a motorized company of 'non-Africans' was with the Katangans until yesterday morning. Some of the residents said the foreigners were Cubans, but [ ] sources believe they may have been Portuguese speaking Angolans. Zaire claims it intercepted a radio communication on 17 May in which rebels in Kolwezi asked for assistance from Cuban or Angolan combat units. There

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Cubans did train and equip the Katangans who are engaged in those military operations, and they are fighting with Soviet and Eastern European weapons supplied to them by Cubans in Angola." /SOURCE: Washington Post; Murray Marder/

is no confirmation that any Angolan or Cuban troops were with the rebels." /SOURCE: [REDACTED] items, [REDACTED] 25X1C

23 May 1978: "We have few details about the planning that went into the Katangan attack. Its execution, however, suggests that it was not done on the spur of the moment. The rebels apparently had predetermined targets and enough supplies to get to them."

"There may well have been an Angolan and/or Cuban role in the planning." /SOURCE: [REDACTED] items, [REDACTED] 25X1C

26 May 1978: From transcript of President Carter's press conference remarks of 25 May: "We believe that Cuba had known of the Katangan plans to invade and obviously did nothing to restrain them from crossing the border. We also know that the Cubans have played a key role in training and equipping the Katangans who attacked." /SOURCE: Washington Post/

26 May 1978: "We believe that the Cubans have helped train and advise Katangan exiles ...at bases in Angola since 1975. Cuban advisers doubtless assisted the rebels in preparing for this month's incursion and that of 1977. We believe Cuba and the USSR have supplied the FNLC with some weapons and equipment, but reporting on this point is infrequent. There have been several unconfirmed reports of Cuban personnel accompanying the insurgents in the most recent incursion. Similar claims during the 1977 invasion were never proved. We therefore believe that President Castro's denials about Cuban involvement with the Katangans are, with one exception, incorrect." /SOURCE: [REDACTED] 26 May 25X1C

27 May 1978: "At a Chicago press conference, the President asserted that Cuba had helped to train and equip the Angola-based rebels who invaded Zaire's Shaba province."

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"Administration officials have said Carter's charges were based on new intelligence received by the White House on Wednesday. However, during the past few days, different administration sources have given conflicting versions of the Cuban role in the Zaire invasion."

"The State Department's official position, which it publicly reiterated yesterday, is that Cuba helped train the rebels. However, it is known that some factions within the department contend that this assertion is grounded in inadequate and unreliable intelligence."

"On Wednesday night, a senior department official in a background briefing for reporters who accompanied Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance to New York, said he was not aware of any recent training provided the rebels by Cuba."

"In response to questions yesterday about whether that contradicted the President's charges, a department spokesman, Tom Reston, said the official had not seen the new information in the possession of the White House when he spoke to reporters Wednesday night."

"Reston said this fresh intelligence backed up the department's earlier public assertion that the rebels were given Cuban training and Soviet weapons. Asked when the training took place, Reston said, 'The time frame was directly leading up to the invasion.'"

"However, some department officials are known to still have doubts about the reliability of the administration's evidence."

"Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) said afterward that he called attention to official Cuban government denials of involvement in Zaire and asked Vance about the Carter charges."

"Vance referred to 'new evidence,' McGovern said. But in response to a motion asking for a written

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report on this evidence, according to McGovern and other committee sources, Vance broke in to say that the new intelligence had originated with the CIA and added: 'I'd prefer that you get the information from Admiral Turner.'"  
/SOURCE: Washington Post: John M. Goshko7

(Bernard Gwertzman in the NY Times printed a similar story on the same day.)

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1 June 1978: "One high-level administration official who disagrees with the pressure on Cuba on grounds that the evidence of Cuban involvement is inconclusive admitted yesterday his side had lost the internal debate with Zbigniew Brzezinski, the presidential national security affairs adviser, on the heated African policy dispute."

"A high administration source shown new intelligence material which White House officials contend implicates the Cubans said yesterday that 'nothing about this is ever going to be conclusive.' He said those senators disposed to believe the 'evidence' would find it sufficient, while those who object to the policy will remain unconvinced." /SOURCE: Washington Post: Karen DeYoung7

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2 June 1978: "Intercepted coded messages to Fidel Castro's Africa Corps in Angola 'covering a period of several days' before the invasion of Zaire's Shaba province make up part of the evidence to support President Carter's charge of Cuban complicity in the invasion."

"In addition, the CIA has possession of 'human intelligence' reports--possibly from Cuba, possibly from

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from Angolan sources--that corroborate the intercepts." /SOURCE: Washington Post; Evans & Novak/

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5 June 1978: "Defense Secretary Harold Brown said today /4 June/ that evidence linking Cuban forces to the recent invasion of Zaire by Katangan rebels had come from prisoners, diplomatic channels, and neighboring countries."

"At the same time, Mr. Brown said that although there were indications that Cubans had accompanied the Katangans, there was 'no convincing evidence that Cubans actually accompanied the invading forces into Zaire.'"

"Mr. Brown's comments today strongly defended the Administration's case."

"As a scientist by training I am accustomed to evaluating evidence," Mr. Brown said. "This of course is not the kind of evidence that a scientist is accustomed to seeing. It consists of reports, statements, some of them eyewitness reports, and it's of various kinds. Some of it

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comes from prisoners who were held by the invaders. Some of it comes through diplomatic channels."

"Some of it comes from the Zairian Government," he said. "Of course we tend to discount that because they're an interested party. But some of it comes from people in surrounding African countries who don't have that same degree of bias."

"What it says to me, having looked at it, is that the Cubans and the Angolans were clearly engaged in the training and equipping and supplying logistics for the forces that invaded Zaire, not once but twice."

"Mr. Brown, in an apparent reference to information received in March 1977, when rebel Katangan forces based in Angola first invaded Zaire, said: 'Some of the intelligence we got said there was going to be a second incursion, and rather soon. And when it happened, that gives added weight to the other things.'" /SOURCE: NY Times, Bernard Weintraub/

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